



WoodsWISE:

Woods Wise Incentives to Stewardship Enhancement

An incentives program for Maine's small family forests

*WoodsWISE implements Maine's
Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP), and portions
of the Forest Stewardship Program
with funding and other support provided by
the USDA Forest Service.*



FLEP



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What is the WoodsWISE program?

The WoodsWISE program's aim is to help Maine's forest landowners make informed decisions based on stewardship principles about their forests, and thereby encourage the long-term sustainability of Maine's forests. If you own even a few acres of Maine's forests, your property is part of an important resource that can provide wildlife habitat, clean water, forest products, and other benefits to Maine communities – as well as be a source of enjoyment and value to you, the landowner.

WoodsWISE is a part of Maine Forest Service's "Be Woods Wise" program, a landowner education and outreach effort geared toward small landowners. The Be Woods Wise program offers brochures, fact sheets, a video, and an informative website, <http://www.state.me.us/doc/mfs/fpm/wwwi/wwwi.htm>. Even more, Maine Forest Service District Foresters can assist you in learning more about your woodlot, and if need be, helping you identify a private consulting forester that can work with you.

What does the WoodsWISE program have to offer?

The WoodsWISE program offers incentives to help landowners get started in managing their land according to their objectives, with the help of a Licensed Forester. Financial incentives are available for:

- Forest Management Plans
- Projects to implement management activities identified in the Plan.

Who is eligible?

Maine landowners who own 10 – 1,000 forested acres statewide may be eligible. Ownerships of up to 5,000 forested acres may be eligible under certain circumstances. Landowners may be individuals, families, organizations, or businesses.

Landowners who take part in WoodsWISE must sign a Stewardship Pledge and make a commitment to manage their land according to stewardship principles and abide by the requirements of the program, in return for receiving technical assistance and financial incentives of the program. At a minimum, landowners must maintain activities under the program for 10 years.

How does the program work?

Landowners may call the Maine Forest Service District Forester nearest you for more information and an application, or contact any Stewardship Forester - a private, Licensed Forester who is determined by MFS to be eligible to provide forestry services under the WoodsWISE program.

The program works by what is called "cost-sharing", in which:

- The landowner applies for financial incentives/technical assistance
- MFS approves the application based on available funds
- The work is done, paid for and documented by the landowner and the Stewardship Forester
- MFS approves the completed work and the documentation
- MFS reimburses the landowner for a portion of the documented cost.

Landowners enter the program by applying to the Maine Forest Service to have a Forest Management Plan prepared. Prior approval must be obtained before work on the Plan is started. The completed Plan must be reviewed and approved by Maine Forest Service. Landowners are reimbursed for a portion of the actual documented costs of having the Plan prepared.

What is a Forest Management Plan?

A Forest Management Plan is a written document, prepared by a Stewardship Forester hired by you to define your land ownership objectives, provide a written description of the forest and related resources, and make recommendations for future activities (10 years or more) to help you achieve your goals.

What are Projects?

Forest Management Plans make recommendations to the landowner about activities to improve the forest and better meet their objectives. Certain activities that involve a cost to the landowner may be eligible for "cost-sharing," including additional services from a Stewardship Forester. Check with the Maine Forest Service or a Stewardship Forester about Application Periods and eligible types of Projects.

How much reimbursement do landowners receive under WoodsWISE?

Reimbursement amounts for both Plans and Projects are based on the size and type of plan or project. Generally, payments are limited to 50% or less of the landowner's actual costs.